

**The American Jewish Committee**

Office of Government and International Affairs

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Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), a national human relations organization with over 150,000 members and supporters represented by 33 regional chapters, to urge you to support a resolution introduced by Representative Rush Holt commemorating the 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate (H.Con.Res.260).

Forty years ago today, an overwhelming majority of Bishops of the Catholic Church approved—by a vote of 2,221 to 88—Nostra Aetate, perhaps the most significant declaration regarding religious tolerance of modern times. Under the auspices of Pope Paul VI, Nostra Aetate—translated as “In Our Time”—redefined the Church’s perspective on other faith traditions, thereby opening the door not only to opportunities for interfaith dialogue and respect between Catholics and Jews, but also between Catholics and Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and other faith traditions.

It is no overstatement to say that the 40 years since Nostra Aetate have seen more open dialogue and better relations between the Jewish and Catholic communities than the entire prior 2,000 year history of the Church—and this historic document has had an important and beneficial impact on relations between Jews and other Christian communities as well.

The 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate presents the opportunity to educate the public on this landmark declaration and also to promote greater religious tolerance and dialogue. H.Con.Res.260 celebrates the historic change in the relationship between Catholics and Jews, encourages continued interreligious dialogue, as well as condemns anti-Semitism, and encourages the United States to continue its role as a global leader in the battle against anti-Semitism and religious intolerance.

AJC strongly urges you to support H.Con.Res.260, and stand against religious intolerance and anti-Semitism, as well as recognize the historic steps taken 40 years ago and to this day by the Vatican in the cause of interfaith comity. Thank you for considering our views on this important initiative.

Respectfully,

Richard T. Foltin
Legislative Director and Counsel

David M. Elcott
U.S. Director of Interreligious Affairs